LEVEL news

Great Lakes - St. Lawrence River Water Levels

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Water Levels for the Great Lakes and Montreal Harbour ... a monthly bulletin from Canadian Hydrographic Service

About the monthly Water Level bulletin

June Precipitation Over the Great Lakes

As a percentage of the long-term June average:

Great Lakes Basin	86%
Lake Erie (including Lake St. Clair)	92%
Lake Superior	73%
Lakes Michigan-Huron	94%
Lake Ontario	83%

Note: These figures

May Increases Reflected in June Monthly Mean Water Levels

In last month's LEVELnews we reported that at the beginning of June water levels on Lakes Michigan-Huron were 30 cm higher than they were at the same time last year and 28 cm below average. At the same time, information provided in the water level information table and the May 2004 Water Level Bulletin, indicated that the May 2004 monthly mean water level for Lakes Michigan-Huron was only 20 cm higher than it was in May 2003 and 40 cm below average. These differences left a number of LEVELnews readers wondering if the values provided were incorrect or if they were misinterpreting the information in someway. The following discussion should help clarify this issue.

Daily water levels recorded on Lakes Michigan-Huron on June 1, 2004 were 30 cm higher than they were on June 1, 2003. However, because much of the 23 cm increase in water levels experienced during May occurred during the last half of the month, May's monthly mean water level did not increase as much as one might have expected. As a result, the May 2004 monthly mean water level was only 20 cm higher than May 2003.

Part of the increase experienced during May is reflected in June's monthly mean water level. Daily water levels on the Lakes Michigan-Huron increased 9 cm during June, but June's monthly mean water level is 19 cm higher than May's, 31 cm higher than last year, and just 27 cm below average.

Great Lakes Water Level Information

	June Monthly Mean Level		Beginning of July Level	
Lake	Compared to Monthly Average (1918-2002)	Compared to One Year Ago	Compared to Beginning-of-Month Average (1918-2002)	Compared to One Year Ago
Superior	11 cm below	12 cm above	12 cm below	15 cm above
Michigan-Huron	27 cm below	31 cm above	26 cm below	32 cm above
St. Clair	5 cm below	23 cm above	5 cm below	22 cm above

are preliminary.

June Outflows From the Great Lakes

As a percentage of the long-term June average:

Lake Superior 101%

Lake Erie 99%

Lake Huron 90%

Lake Ontario 103%

Note: These figures are preliminary.

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Summary information for "LEVEL*news*"

Erie	4 cm above	19 cm above	4 cm above	19 cm above
Ontario	10 cm above	2 cm above	7 cm above	1 cm above

Lake Ontario Example

Recent changes in Lake Ontario water levels also provide a good example of where care must be taken when discussing changes on a daily or monthly basis.

After increasing 18 cm during May, daily water levels on Lake Ontario increased 2 cm more during the first two days in June. After holding steady from June 2nd to the 11th, daily levels began to decline on June 12th. At the end of June the daily level for the lake was 3 cm lower than it was on the 1st of the month.

On a monthly basis, however, water levels increased 10 cm from May to June, reflecting the increase in daily water levels that occurred for the most part in late May. Therefore, although Lake Ontario started its seasonal decline around mid-June when we look at monthly mean water level data the decline will first appear in the July value.

Water Level Data

Whether you would like to know approximately what water level conditions are like, would like to track water levels as they change from day to day, or need to know how water levels compare to Chart Datum right now, the information is available. Please visit: http://www.on.ec.gc.ca/water/levels/intro.html and choose from the selection of links provided under the "Current and recent water level data" and "Water Level Forecasts" headings.

Current Conditions

The levels of lakes St. Clair, Erie and Ontario appear to have reached their annual peaks in June, while the levels on lakes Superior and Michigan-Huron continued to rise, albeit slowly, during the month. The level of Lakes Michigan-Huron is expected to reach its annual peak in July, while Lake Superior is expected to continue its seasonal rise during July.

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